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May 21, 2012

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing to express concern about and provide perspective regarding the proposed House Bill 965 "Broaden Successful AP Participation."

By way of reference, I am a Professor of Chemistry at NC State University, I am a member of the UNC System Faculty Assembly (currently the parliamentarian), and District 5 representative on the Wake County Board of Education. I am also the parent of a student who has taken several AP classes and exams.

We all share the desire to increase the educational standards in our high schools, and to better prepare our students for careers or postsecondary education. That said, singling out AP courses is not the most effective mechanism to accomplish this. In fact, as has been discussed by members of the UNC Faculty Assembly on multiple occasions, faculty in universities across the UNC system in general do not find that AP courses provide comparable education to college level courses. In my own department, we do not recognize an AP score in Chemistry unless it is a 5. And for our Chemistry majors, to obtain credit for the English 101 writing course we require a 5 or 4 with demonstration of work. We are not alone in such a requirement. We simply have found that AP courses in high school do not adequately prepare students for higher learning. It is not wise to pass this bill that reinforces the idea that AP courses are college equivalent, when that simply is not the case. In this regard, I encourage you to strike the language of section 115C-83.1.(b) which tends to over sell the idea that AP is equivalent to postsecondary credit. Similarly if present, section (d) should require a kind of truth in advertising, indicating that no colleges or universities give credit for a score below a three (3) and many universities and programs require scoring a five (5) in order to receive college credit.

Goal 115C-83.1.(a)(1) that public school students should be exempt from paying fees for AP exams is laudable. Currently the more than \$80 per exam is cost prohibitive for many families. Economic circumstances of a family should not interfere with a child's educational opportunities.

Goal 115C-83.1.(a)(2) however is very unwise. There are countless examples of manipulation and fraud when teachers are offered incentives for test scores. In the WCPSS school system, I have worked some with a group of biology teachers, one of which self professes to "drill and kill" and while two others in the same school work to provide hands on laboratory experience and emphasize critical thinking. The students of the former routinely score higher on exams while the students of the latter are actually more prepared for higher learning.

In addition, said AP Bonus is discriminatory against those teachers who work equally hard, or harder teaching students who are not at the AP academic ability level.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to strike section Goal 115C-83.1.(a)(2).

In addition to the above, I would like to bring to your attention that to date, the College Board has refused to make AP exams available at the mid-year point. This severely disadvantages students taking classes on a block schedule. Currently a student may have completed their course work at the end of the Fall semester, but not be able to take the AP exam until it is offered in the Spring. I am aware that the College Board organization is keenly interested in this legislation. They have much to gain with increased exam participation. While I cannot, with my best professional judgment support this bill, if it is to move forward, I strongly encourage you to use the leverage of the State of North Carolina to encourage the College Board to make AP exams available both at the end of the Fall and Spring Semesters.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. I would be glad to discuss these issues pertaining to AP exams and courses with you at any time.

Sincerely,

James (Jim) D. Martin, PhD
Professor of Chemistry, NCSU
District 5, Wake County Board of Education